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In Search of a Demos:  
Transformations of Citizenship and  
Belonging in the Republic of  
Macedonia

Ljubica Spaskovska

Working Paper 2010/11



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University of Edinburgh, School of Law  
The Europeanisation of Citizenship in the Successor States of the Former Yugoslavia  
(CITSEE)

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**In Search of a Demos:  
Transformations of Citizenship and Belonging in the Republic of Macedonia**  
Ljubica Spaskovska, School of Law, University of Edinburgh<sup>1</sup>

**Abstract**

The paper explores the transformations of citizenship regimes and belonging in the Republic of Macedonia within the framework of five consecutive and at times overlapping phases: the (zero) socialist phase; the consolidation phase; the contestation phase; the intervention phase and the stabilisation phase. It argues that they were/are accompanied by a corresponding specific type of citizenship: supranational; abortive ethno-national; ethnizenship and new supranational (European) citizenship. Through analysis of context-specific and regional developments, the paper explores the phenomena of politicisation of citizenship, minority rights, diaspora and Europeanisation in addition to providing an insight into the different citizenship regimes Macedonia has gone through and the implications of their transformations and amendments at different points in time.

**Keywords:**

citizenship; contestation; ethno-national; Europeanisation; Macedonia; Yugoslavia.

Today's time dates from yesterday, the day before yesterday,  
and all former times  
– F. Braudel

For citizens are not born, but made  
– B. Spinoza

**Introduction**

In the conclusion to a chapter in a study on Eastern Europe, Robin Okey quotes the case of a British traveller in Epirus who 'in 1805 was entertained by a rendition of Christian rebel songs after which the Ottoman governor led the dancing in bare feet'. Consequently, the author is led to conclude that 'classes, peoples, cultures lived cheek by jowl, at once infinitely apart and inextricably entwined' (Okey 1986: 33). Although originally applied to the whole of Eastern Europe, it seems that this claim has nowhere been truer than in the Balkans and in particular in the region of Macedonia. Christian and Muslim Slavs, Turks, Albanians, Greeks, Yuruks, Vlachs, Sephardic Jews, and Roma inhabited a relatively small region where linguistic, cultural, religious and ethnic borders did not necessarily correspond and where

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<sup>1</sup> Ljubica Spaskovska, Associate Researcher, CITSEE project. Email: [ljubiji@yahoo.com](mailto:ljubiji@yahoo.com).

identities were porous, multiple and shifting. The classical western concept of citizenship implying status, membership, rights and duties (Joppke 2007; Shaw 2007) was introduced in the Southern Balkans and Macedonia only after the end of the First World War which followed the Balkan Wars and the demise of the Ottoman Empire.<sup>2</sup> Because of the specific interplay of historical circumstances, the multi-ethnic outlook and an on-going clash between 'state nationalism' and 'minority nationalism' (Kymlicka 2001: 222), citizenship in the Macedonian context has been generally conceived of as membership and belonging or has been understood in only one of its dimensions – that of identity. This was reinforced within the decentralised federal system of socialist Yugoslavia, where – in particular after the Yugoslav Constitution of 1974 – the constituent republics acted as *de facto* sovereign nation states.

Following the proclamation of Macedonia's internally and externally contested independence in 1991, Macedonia was confirmed as the state of the (ethnic) Macedonian people and minorities living in its territory. The core constitutional reforms came with the 2001 Ohrid Framework Agreement, when the country progressed from being a nation-state of the Macedonian people to being a multi-ethnic (or as some would argue – a bi-national) rather than a civic state. Thus, this paper explores among other things the several temporal junctures crucial for the understanding of the transformations of citizenship and identity in the Macedonian context. Considerable decentralisation reform, along with the extension of language, representation and other substantial rights to its large Albanian minority, put in place a power-sharing system (Lijphart 1991). This did not, however, change the ethnic conception of political life where political parties function and run on a purely ethnic basis, nor did it solve the most crucial problem the Macedonian state has been struggling with since its foundation as a federal unit of socialist Yugoslavia in 1944 – namely its contested statehood and nationhood coming both from within and from without.

This paper seeks to understand the transformations of citizenship and citizenship regimes in contemporary Macedonia, against the background of the Yugoslav disintegration, the internal ethnic and ideological divide and a still uncertain European path. Some of the key problems this paper aims to analyse are:

- the understanding of citizenship within the context of the ethnicisation and politicisation of citizenship, belated Macedonian nationalism and 'identitarian entrepreneurs' (Brubaker & Cooper 2000: 27) on all sides;
- the politics of numbers as related to citizenship and the citizens' body;
- the position and role of smaller minorities;
- diaspora politics; and
- the prospect of Europeanisation in view of the challenges Macedonia faces.

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<sup>2</sup> Legally speaking, it took a decade longer, since the Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, to which the territory of today's Republic of Macedonia belonged, enacted its first citizenship law only in 1928.

The transformation of the citizenship regime and all of the above phenomena will be analysed within a framework of four consecutive phases which have arguably at times overlapped and have provided for a complex interplay of factors and consequences:

- 1) the consolidation phase
- 2) the contestation phase
- 3) the intervention phase
- 4) the stabilisation phase

The paper will also reflect upon the historical background and what one could term in this proposed framework 'the zero (socialist) phase' of Macedonian citizenship evolution and the corresponding dimension of supranational Yugoslav citizenship. The first and second phases outlined above will be explored through the phenomenon of abortive ethno-national citizenship, during which the Macedonian state made an attempt at styling itself as the nation-state of ethnic Macedonians. The intervention phase put an end to the exclusive ethno-national concept, stopped the inter-ethnic strife, but engineered however what I would call a specific ethnizenship where citizens realize their rights, duties and participation in the public and political sphere solely as members of ethnic or religious communities. A final stabilisation phase that could be said to have started after the last amendments to the citizenship legislation in 2008 and that coincided with Macedonia's attempts to join the EU could be expected to conclude with the introduction of a new type of supranational citizenship, namely European citizenship. This should strengthen the stability of Macedonian citizenship, in the long term, as it is very likely to diminish the importance of exclusive ethno-national drives, visions and initiatives.

## **1 Historical background: the socialist phase and supranational citizenship**

Since the introduction of travel documents and specific civic rights which cut across religious groups came only to the Balkans in the latter half of the nineteenth century, one could still draw a clear line between the different perceptions and understanding of citizenship. Because of the particular developments in state-building in the Balkans where a certain sense of loss and disagreement over non-corresponding ethnic, national and state borders has lingered on for decades, the concept of 'de- and re-ethnicization of citizenship' (Joppke 2003) might be particularly useful. In the context of the former Yugoslavia, there were constant initiatives to foster the de-ethnicisation of citizenship at the federal level, whilst citizenship simultaneously was partially if not overtly re-ethnicised at the republican level. The process of the dissolution of the Yugoslav federation between 1990 and 1992 not only initiated diverse mechanisms of outright re-ethnicisation of citizenship and 'ethnic engineering' (Štiks 2010), but it also put an emphasis, exploited and even abused the

collective identity paradigm, that which 'favours the passive, but emotionally engaging citizen' (Giesen & Eder 2001: 6). Although not to the same degree as Serbia and Croatia, Macedonia was not an exception to this regional trend in the early 1990s.

The roots of the above-mentioned perception of citizenship through the lenses of ethno-national belonging can be traced to the very conception and function of the Yugoslav federation, particularly after the de facto confederalisation of 1974. As Brubaker rightly notes regarding the regime in the USSR, but is equally valid for the Yugoslav context, although anti-nationalist, the regime was anything but anti-national, where 'far from ruthlessly suppressing nationhood, the regime went to unprecedented lengths in institutionalizing it and codifying it' (Brubaker & Cooper 2000: 26). He further cites the example of Romanians and Hungarians in Transylvania, which bears striking resemblances to the Yugoslav context, where 'identitarian entrepreneurs' (particularly prominent in Yugoslavia from the 1980s) made significant efforts to blur and conceal 'the fluidity and ambiguity that arise from mixed marriages, from bilingualism, from migration...from intergenerational assimilation (in both directions), and - perhaps most important - from sheer indifference to the claims of ethnocultural nationality' (Brubaker & Cooper 2000: 27). One can rightfully argue that especially during the last three decades of the Yugoslav federation there was a certain type of Yugoslav 'cultural cosmopolitanism' (Held 1995: 326) which developed in spite of the institutionalised national discourses. Being a cultural project, 'cultural cosmopolitanism emphasizes the possible fluidity of individual identity....It is the ability to stand outside a singular location (the location of one's own birth, land, upbringing, conversion) and to mediate traditions that lie at its core' (Held 1995: 327).

### 1.1 Political-legal structure within Yugoslavia

Until the demise of the Ottoman Empire in the Balkans during the Balkan Wars of 1912-1913, the population of the region of Macedonia (Macedonian Slavs, Turks, Albanians, Bulgarians, Vlachs, Greeks, Jews, and Roma) was subject to the Ottoman 'Law on Nationality of January 19, 1869'. Art. 9 of the Law stipulated that 'Every person inhabiting the imperial dominions is considered an Ottoman subject and treated as an Ottoman subject' (Flournoy & Hudson 1929: 569). The territory of present-day Republic of Macedonia was incorporated into the Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes in 1918.<sup>3</sup> Although Macedonia formally entered post-Second World War socialist Yugoslavia as an equal partner in the federation and for the first time in its history it was recognised as a separate political, national and cultural entity, it was de facto a 'junior partner' (Rossos 2008: 235). Nevertheless, as one of the five and later six constituent Yugoslav nations, it went through processes which

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<sup>3</sup> For a more detailed outline of the historical background of the citizenship regimes please see: Ljubica Spaskovska 'Macedonia's Nationals, Minorities and Refugees in the Post-Communist Labyrinths of Citizenship', CITSEE Working Paper Series 2010/05 <<http://www.law.ed.ac.uk/citsee/workingpapers/>>.



finalised its nation-building: the codification of the alphabet and the language which was followed by the establishment of the state university, Macedonian television and radio services, an Academy of Sciences and Arts, theatres, opera and ballet ensembles, and publishing houses. With an improved economy and better standards of living, with illiteracy rates dropping from 75 per cent in 1939 to 35.7 per cent in 1953 and 10.9 per cent in 1981 (Rossos 2008: 252) and a relatively free realm of mobility and cultural expression (provided one did not question or oppose Tito's regime and Yugoslavia's *raison d'être*), Macedonia had every reason to appreciate its Yugoslav years and view the federation as a veritable safe haven. Yugoslavia provided something of a buffer zone between the newly established republic and its neighbours, mainly Bulgaria and Greece who refused to endorse the existence of a Macedonian nation or a state. There were not many Macedonians in the inner circle around Tito, yet some participated in the highest milieus of the federal governing bodies and the Party.<sup>4</sup>

Thus, 'the newly enfranchised groups' in particular, such as the Macedonians and the Bosnian Muslims, but also non-South Slavic groups such as the Albanians, were those that 'found their opportunities for access to the system's rewards enhanced' (Friedman 1996: 146).<sup>5</sup> The 1974 Yugoslav Constitution re-introduced the precedence of the national dimension of the republic as 'a state based on sovereignty of nations, the authority and self-management of working people and all workers, and...a socialist self-managing democratic community of working people, citizens and equal nations and nationalities'.

However, many minority rights protection mechanisms were in place in socialist Yugoslavia and constituted an important dimension of the Yugoslav socialist citizenship. The pre-1974 Constitution of the Socialist Republic of Macedonia established that the nationalities and national minorities living in Macedonia were equal in rights and duties with the Macedonian majority, while the 1974 Constitution for the first time mentioned two particular nationalities – Albanians and Turks – in the definition of the Republic (Caca 2001). Chapter 11 on the 'Equality of nationalities' read that 'Municipalities and the Republic ensure that nationalities [will] be proportionally represented in the municipal assemblies and the Assembly of the Socialist Republic of Macedonia, and be adequately represented in their bodies'. The assemblies of municipalities where there were different nationalities as well as the Assembly of the Socialist Republic of Macedonia established Commissions for

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<sup>4</sup> Kiro Gligorov, the first president of independent Macedonia after 1991, held the important positions as Federal Secretary (Minister) of Finance from 1962-1967 and President of the Yugoslav Federal Assembly. Stojan Andov, the spokesperson of the first post-Yugoslav Macedonian Parliament was the head of the Yugoslav negotiating team with the European Communities in the second half of the 1970s and Yugoslavia's last ambassador to Iraq.

<sup>5</sup> When in the spring of 1967 the Center for Public Opinion Research in a survey asked respondents: 'In general, would you say that you are very satisfied, mainly satisfied, or unsatisfied with your family's prospects for the future?', 77 per cent or more in every republic and province except Slovenia (where the percentage was 61 per cent) answered that they were 'satisfied' (Burg 1983: 49-50). Hence, the upward progress until the 1970s and an overall improving quality of life worked to strengthen the loyalty to the state. This is in line with a 1974 survey which found that 'among Yugoslav nations, Macedonians were most supportive of the regime's "universal" values of socialism and ethnic tolerance' (Irwin 2010: 331).

inter-ethnic relations which monitored the realisation of the implementation of the equality provisions and they were composed of an equal number of Macedonians, Albanians and Turks (Caca 2001: 152).

Although art. 249 of the 1974 Yugoslav Constitution provided that 'Yugoslav citizens shall have a single citizenship of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia', republics were free to draft their own citizenship legislation for which they had responsibility. This is particularly visible in the 1977 Law on Citizenship of the Socialist Republic of Macedonia which replaced the previous Law from 1965.<sup>6</sup> Art. 1 of the Law did not follow the previous two laws as it established that 'The citizens of the Socialist Republic of Macedonia possess citizenship of the Socialist Republic of Macedonia'. It is a specific feature of the Yugoslav socialist citizenship that it sought to reconcile pronounced unitary and disintegrative, federative and devolutionary tendencies, and this was beneficial to Macedonia and its state-building, as 'the concept of a protective federation was attractive for smaller national groups, such as Macedonians, who felt threatened by Greece and Bulgaria' (Sekulic, Massey & Hodson 1994: 86). Hence, Yugoslav citizenship could be said to have been acting as a second protective layer, a supranational umbrella which the Macedonian political elites sought to preserve in the early 1990s. Accordingly, on 6 June 1991 in Sarajevo in the context of growing ethnic tensions, Bosnian and Macedonian Presidents Alija Izetbegović and Kiro Gligorov put forward a so-called 'Platform for the future of the Yugoslav community'.<sup>7</sup> More precisely, this proposed a formation of a Union or a Community of Yugoslav States, which would abide by all the European mechanisms for human rights protection and where only the territorial units or republics, and not the nations or peoples would have the right to self-determination and secession. The Platform also suggested the creation of a common market functioning by the rules of the EMU (European Monetary Union) and a currency tied to the ECU (European Currency Unit), independent foreign policies for the republics, their membership in the UN (although Yugoslavia would also retain its membership), and professional defence forces whose command staff would proportionally reflect the ethnic balance, while the republics retained their territorial defence units.<sup>8</sup> In a way, this proposal reflected the connection which had always existed between Yugoslavism and Europeanism, the former seen by many Macedonians and many other Yugoslav citizens as being a step closer to full integration into (Western) Europe. As has been argued, the proximity to Europe and

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<sup>6</sup> 'Закон за државјанството на Социјалистичка Република Македонија'/Law on Citizenship of the Socialist Republic of Macedonia, Службен весник на Социјалистичка Република Македонија 19/77/*Official Gazette of the Socialist Republic of Macedonia* 19/77.

<sup>7</sup> 'Platform for the future of the Yugoslav community', *Документи за Република Македонија 1990-2005/Documents on the Republic of Macedonia 1990-2005* (Skopje: Faculty of Law Iustinian I, 2008), 137.

<sup>8</sup> The EC stated that the Platform was an excellent basis for solving the Yugoslav crisis, while the Bundestag in a project-resolution on Yugoslavia recommended continuation of the negotiations between the republics on the basis of the proposed Platform by Gligorov and Izetbegović (Gligorov 2002). As Lord Carrington, chairman of the Peace Conference on Yugoslavia and former UK foreign secretary said to President Gligorov on the subject of the proposed Platform: 'Mr. Gligorov, all that is very well, but it has one major flaw - it is rational. And the situation in Yugoslavia is not!' (Gligorov 2002).

the awareness of lagging behind 'encouraged a Yugoslav identity as a reflection of hopes for greater integration into the European Community. An important step in this direction was the abandonment of particularistic, traditional notions and movement toward a vague notion of "Europeanism"' (Sekulic, Massey & Hodson 1994: 86).

## **1.2 Fractured citizenship – Macedonia's Albanians**

With the dissolution of Yugoslavia, the 'combative federalism' referred to by political scientist Slobodan Samardžić in 1990 (Hayden 2000: 30) was replaced in the Macedonian institutions and political scene by a form of combative ethno-nationalism. Internal voices of discontent came from Macedonia's most numerous ethnic minority, the Albanians. With the dissolution of Yugoslavia, Albanian status was downgraded from that of a recognised Yugoslav nationality (*narodnost*) with all associated political and cultural rights to that of a minority in independent Macedonia. The six South Slavic nations (*narodi*) were the constituent peoples of Yugoslavia, while Albanians and Hungarians had the status of nationalities (*narodnosti*), a status higher than that of a minority. The 1974 Yugoslav constitution which granted autonomy to Kosovo and Vojvodina and gave them equal representation at the federal level insisted on the equality of all nations and nationalities, defining the federation as 'a socialist self-managed democratic community of working peoples and citizens and equal nations and nationalities' (art. 1). Similarly, art. 171 established that the members of the nationalities had the right to use their mother tongue and alphabet in executing all rights and duties, in front of the state organs, as well as the right to education in their own language on the territories of all federal republics and provinces. Moreover, the Preamble to the 1974 Constitution of the Socialist Republic of Macedonia established that 'Socialist Republic of Macedonia is the national state of the Macedonian nation and the state of the Albanian and Turkish nationalities in it' (Milosavlevski 2003). Furthermore, with Kosovo as a *de facto* republic, acting as a separate federal unit and offering university-level education in the Albanian language, many Albanians from Macedonia also gravitated towards Prishtina. 1989 saw the amendment of the Constitution of socialist Macedonia where the preamble omitted the Albanian and the Turkish nationalities from the definition of the Republic. In 1991 Kosovo, although still the point of reference for many Macedonian Albanians, even though by that time it had lost its autonomy, became part of a foreign country, the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.

Although their status within Macedonia was downgraded after independence, one should still recognise that international minority rights standards in Macedonia were the highest of any in the region. Art. 7 of the first Macedonian post-Yugoslav Constitution established that 'in the units of local self-government where the majority of the inhabitants belong to a nationality, in addition to the Macedonian language and Cyrillic alphabet, their language and alphabet are also in official use, in

a manner determined by law'.<sup>9</sup> Art. 78, in continuity with similar provisions from the socialist era, established the Council for Inter-Ethnic Relations consisting of the President of the Assembly and two members each from the ranks of the Macedonians, Albanians, Turks, Vlachs and Roma, plus two members from other nationalities such as Serbs, Bosniaks, Egyptians, and Croats. Although there was arguably a long tradition of peaceful coexistence between the two major ethnic groups in Macedonia, ethnic entrepreneurs on both sides started building upon fears of insecurity for the future (Koppa 2001) and this led to a phase of outright contestation of the ethno-national citizenship regime put in place at the time of independence in 1991. The dismantling of the supranational Yugoslav citizenship regime and its complex mechanisms for the accommodation of ethnic questions and demands, as well as the disappearance of the supra-ethnic umbrella naturally led to articulations of discontent and an indispensable search for a new viable model.

## **2 Consolidation and Contestation: an abortive ethno-national citizenship**

The former Yugoslav republics, in compliance with the newly adopted self-image of nation-states after 1989, ventured into a process of 'nationalization of ethnies' (Oomen 1997: 234), as opposed to a 'citizenization of ethnies', i.e. conferring status of citizens without assimilation. During the last decade of the twentieth century, the former Yugoslav republics in many respects were not capable even of maintaining the standards of what Kymlicka refers to as 'minimal citizenship' (Kymlicka 2001: 298) - implying an obligation not to break the law and not to harm others. One might argue that this was due to a widespread and entrenched understanding of citizenship only as belonging and/or ethno-national membership. That is in line with what Charles Taylor refers to as the 'modern preoccupation with identity and recognition' (Taylor 1994: 26), something particularly pertinent to the Macedonian case with regard to the twenty-year long conflict with Greece over the name of the country and the historical debates over the recognition of the Macedonian language and identity.

Macedonia's position as an independent state was highly uncertain until April 1992, when the Yugoslav Army eventually withdrew all of its personnel and equipment. As Troebst (2001: 65) argues, 'the changes of scene in 1991 came all the more drastically: Bulgaria, the main opponent in the Macedonian controversy, made an attempt to style itself as the protector of Skopje, whereas Greece, along with Serbia, would have preferred that the new Macedonian state disappear from the face of the earth'. Although Bulgaria was among the first countries to recognise the independence of Macedonia, it came without recognition of a Macedonian nation or

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<sup>9</sup> 'Constitution of the Republic of Macedonia', *Assembly of the Republic of Macedonia*, <<http://www.sobranie.mk/en/default-en.asp?ItemID=9F7452BF44EE814B8DB897C1858B71FF>>.

language. Thus, at the Copenhagen CSCE Conference, the Bulgarian delegation referred to two million 'Bulgarians' living in Yugoslav Macedonia and only later did they adopt the term 'persons of Bulgarian origin' (Kofos 2001).

Macedonia's southern neighbour, on the other hand, exercised political pressure over the name of Macedonia, thereby causing problems with its international recognition.<sup>10</sup> The name issue with the newly independent state in the early 1990s dominated the Greek media. In 1992 a one-million strong public protest in Thessaloniki was held under the slogan 'I Makedonia einai elliniki' [Macedonia is Greek] that 'raised not a few eyebrows in Europe where people had been associating for years the name of Macedonia with the Yugoslav province...' (Kofos 2001: 234). The initial years of Macedonia's existence as an independent state were therefore ones of instability, socio-political and legal uncertainties, crises, and strenuous efforts for state-consolidation.

What prevented a likely explosion in the early 1990s was undoubtedly the involvement of the international community. It has been argued that it was not until the international community became involved that some stability was established in the region (Troebst 2001). The involvement of the international community first came in the form of an OSCE Spillover Monitoring Mission from September 1992 and later in the blue-helmet United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) from January 1993. The latter was not only the first involvement of the US Army on the territory of the former Yugoslavia (Clement 2001), but it was also the only arguably successful and timely intervention by the UN in the region. Replaced from 1995 onwards by UNPREDEP (United Nations Preventive Deployment Force), it had its mandate extended at two crucial moments for the stability of the region, i.e. in 1997 at the time of the almost civil war in Albania and in 1998 at the onset of the Kosovo crisis (United Nations Security Council 1998/1999).<sup>11</sup>

## 2.1 From dissolution to fragile statehood

The Macedonian Albanian community boycotted the 1991 independence referendum as well as the census the same year. The Albanian political parties in Macedonia organised a referendum on autonomy in January 1992. One of the principal points of contestation was the Preamble of the Macedonian Constitution which stated 'the

<sup>10</sup> Although the Arbitration Commission of the Peace Conference on the Former Yugoslavia in its Opinion No. 6 recommended that the European Community should accept Macedonia's request for recognition concluding the country meets the required criteria, the EC was reluctant to do so. The EU established diplomatic relations with Macedonia only in December 1995.

<sup>11</sup> Its mandate was not renewed as of 28 February 1999 because of a veto on the draft resolution by China. UNPREDEP maintained close cooperation with the OSCE Spillover Monitor Mission, the European Commission Monitoring Mission and the NATO forces in Kosovo. This, along with its clearly defined mandate 'to monitor and report any developments in the border areas which could undermine confidence and stability in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and threaten its territory' reveals the centrality of Macedonia's position on the Balkan geo-political and security map and the crucial role the international community (in particular the USA) played in preserving peace and borders in the Southern Balkans.  
<[http://www.un.org/Depts/DPKO/Missions/unpred\\_p.htm](http://www.un.org/Depts/DPKO/Missions/unpred_p.htm)>.

historical fact that Macedonia is established as a national state of the Macedonian people, in which full equality as citizens and permanent coexistence with the Macedonian people is provided for Albanians, Turks, Vlachs, Roma and other nationalities living in the Republic of Macedonia'. Moreover, their grievances centred around the protection of language rights and the provision of higher education in Albanian, proportional representation in the political sphere, and the display of non-state symbols. All of that led to the widespread feeling among Albanians that Macedonian citizenship was discriminatory and that the Constitution as well as the citizenship law itself rendered them 'second-class citizens' in independent Macedonia. As Horowitz underlines, 'Beyond admission to citizenship, then, there is the question of special provision for the admission of one group more than another to educational institutions, to the civil service, or to the armed forces' (Horowitz 1993: 25). Symbols entered the realm of contestation and conflict when Rumi Osmani, the Mayor of the town of Gostivar was arrested over the flying of the Albanian national flag in front of the municipal offices in 1997.

The politics of symbols fed into the politics of (contested) numbers. The census estimated the Albanian population at 21.7 per cent based on a statistical projection because of the boycott by the Albanian community (Irwin 2010). Although both Macedonian and Albanian public opinion converged around the view that their respective ethnic groups were under-counted while the other was over-counted, the essence of the problem was that at over 20 per cent of the overall population the second largest ethnic community in Macedonia saw being treated in the same way as other significantly smaller minorities as unjust. This reinforced an image of the Macedonian Albanians among the ethnic Macedonian majority as disloyal and as having secessionist aspirations. A pattern of perceiving minorities as disloyal and posing a threat has been present throughout many Eastern and Central European countries (Kymlicka 2001). However, as Kymlicka plausibly argues, 'while minorities do make claims against the state, these must be understood as a response to the claims that the state makes against minorities' (Kymlicka 2001: 50).

The economic hardships which marked the last decade of the twentieth century should certainly not be overlooked in this context. All of the former communist countries faced serious challenges regarding the economic transition with its unexpectedly enormous costs that resulted in what Michael Kennedy calls 'a counternarrative of transition' (Kennedy 2002: 109). Increasing inequality, growing poverty<sup>12</sup> and the radical change from a predictable, safe existence profoundly affected the quality of life, including the physical and the mental health of the citizens of the post-communist societies, with a documented increase in suicide rates and a decrease in the average life expectancy (Holmes 1997). The Law on the Transformation of Social Capital was enacted in 1993 but the privatisation was

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<sup>12</sup> Across the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe as a whole in the period between the late 1980s and 1995 the numbers of the population in poverty rose from under fourteen million, or 4 per cent to 168 million, or 45 per cent of the population (Cox 2003). Since the real losers were the middle class, one could speak of the phenomenon of the 'missing middle' (Kaminska 2007).

conducted in a highly corrupt and illegal manner with disastrous consequences for the Macedonian economy and the employees of the privatised or failed companies. The embargo which Greece imposed in the period 1994-1995 was an additional blow to the otherwise fragile Macedonian economy.<sup>13</sup> Despite the strong position of Greece as an EU member, 'the embargo era placed its mark on the international perception of Greece's Macedonian policy, as bullish and aggressive' (Kofos 2001: 246). Only three years later the sanctions imposed on the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia cost Macedonia over two billion dollars (Clement 2001: 293). As the Yugoslav experience has proven in the late 1980s, sensitive inter-ethnic issues could be easily inflamed by deteriorating economic conditions and economic hardship could be in return translated into ethnic terms. Indeed, 'when economic collapse becomes coupled with ethnic mobilization, it makes for a uniquely combustible combination' (Pippidi & Krastev 2004: 142).

## 2.2 Contested citizenship

It was in the highly polarised and unstable political context in November 1992 that the belated and long debated Law on Citizenship was enacted. It was based on the principle of legal continuity with the citizenship of the Socialist Republic of Macedonia and thus 1,878,820 people ex officio acquired Macedonian citizenship (ECRI 1999), or about 90 per cent of the total adult population, including more than 1,430,000 adults (Lazarova-Trajkovska 1998). The contemporary media reported on the fierce debate in Parliament on the residence requirement provision, as proposed figures ranged from five to thirty years. This clearly reflected the perceived threat from the internal minorities and neighbouring countries, a phenomenon common to many small nations. The ethnic Macedonian perception of the nation and the new Macedonian state portrayed the considerable number of Albanian non-national residents or unregistered residents from Kosovo and Serbia as a problem and a threat.<sup>14</sup> The 1992 Law on Citizenship<sup>15</sup> was criticised in respect of some of its controversial provisions, such as the long residency requirement of fifteen years and

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<sup>13</sup> Both countries reached a partial settlement of the conflict with the signing of an Interim Accord on 13 September 1995 in New York, which formalised their bilateral relations. Both states expressed a commitment to continue UN sponsored negotiations for the settlement of the name issue.

<sup>14</sup> These persons generally moved for educational or work purposes during the existence of socialist Yugoslavia and their citizenship status was to be resolved only later. There were also a relatively small number of refugees from the Yugoslav wars of 1992-1995 who eventually sought Macedonian citizenship and non-Macedonian Yugoslav Army staff serving in Macedonia at the time of dissolution who decided to stay mainly because of their Macedonian spouses. According to UNHCR sources, 30,000 refugees from Bosnia came into Macedonia where they were granted temporary protection. In 1998 UNHCR reported 1,400 remaining refugees, most of which were awaiting repatriation. Some of them eventually did stay in Macedonia and acquired Macedonian citizenship. Resolution 1010 (1993) of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe reported 32,000 registered refugees – 1.5 per cent of the population.

'UNHCR Global Appeal 1999 – the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia'

<<http://www.unhcr.org/3eaff43f2e.html>>.

<sup>15</sup> Закон за државјанството на Република Македонија [Law on Citizenship of the Republic of Macedonia], *Службен весник на Република Македонија* [Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia], 67/92.



the requirement that a person seeking ordinary naturalisation should be psychophysically healthy. Hence, in 1992 there were two petitions lodged with the Constitutional Court asking for an opinion on the constitutionality of the Law on Citizenship: one by the parliamentary group of the Party for Democratic Prosperity (PDP), a party of the Albanian minority in Macedonia<sup>16</sup> and another by a citizen of ethnic Macedonian origin who claimed that the Law discriminated against individuals who were physically or mentally handicapped. The Albanian parliamentary group in its petition to the Court<sup>17</sup> claimed that the Law favoured only the knowledge of the Macedonian language, that ethnic Macedonians had privileged access to Macedonian citizenship, that former Yugoslav citizens were now required to fulfil different conditions and that the entire Law had to be questioned since it was passed before a decision on the succession of the former Yugoslavia was reached. The Court issued a Decision by which the petition was refused.

The 'Transitional Provisions' of the Law established that citizens of the SFR Yugoslavia who possessed another republican citizenship and had registered permanent residence in Macedonia at the time of independence could apply for Macedonian citizenship within one year of the entry into force of the Law provided they could prove that they fulfilled the fifteen-year cumulative residence requirement and possessed a permanent source of income. Particularly problematic were the short one-year transitional registration period for former Yugoslav citizens, the high residency requirement and the fact that many Albanian and Roma had to reapply through the ordinary naturalisation procedure, despite the fact that many had resided in Macedonia for many years but lacked a proof of registration or the information on the procedures (Petrusevska 1998; Imeri 2006). The procedures were lengthy and in some cases even the fulfilment of all of the criteria for regular naturalisation did not guarantee that a person would be granted citizenship (Petrusevska 1998). Many cases were refused on the basis of the 'national security' provision, with 'a vast room for uncontrolled use of discretion'<sup>18</sup> (Petrusevska 1998: 171; Imeri 2006).

Among the international observers and reports which pointed out to the problematic citizenship provisions and people with unregulated status was the 1999 report by the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance which made a mention of the presence of many individuals 'with an uncertain status as regards their rights of residence and citizenship' (ECRI 1999: 7). Furthermore, following the

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<sup>16</sup> PDP was the main political party of the Albanian minority until its split in 1994, when a more radical wing formed the PDP (Sh), later PDS/DPA led by Arben Xaferi and Menduh Taci. President of Albania Sali Berisha intervened in the PDP leadership struggle in 1993-4 on the side of radical forces (Pettifer 2001).

<sup>17</sup> 'U. Number: 69/1993-0-0 from 2 June 1993', *Constitutional Court of the Republic of Macedonia* <<http://www.ustavensud.mk/domino/WEBSUD.nsf>>.

<sup>18</sup> The element of discretionary powers of the authorities could be traced back to the 1977 Law on Citizenship of the Socialist Republic of Macedonia, which established that the republican Secretariat for Internal Affairs did not have to provide the reasons for a final negative decision on an application for acquisition of Macedonian citizenship by naturalization or on an application for release from Macedonian citizenship.



thread of the politics of (contested) numbers, the media and political elites speculated with numbers of people who did not have their citizenship status regulated. The available figures, however, indicate that in the period between 1992 and 1998, about 120,000 applications for Macedonian citizenship were received and considered, 95.4 per cent of which with a positive outcome and 4.6 per cent rejected (Lazarova-Trajkovska 1998). As it will be discussed below, the overall number of individuals who actually acquired Macedonian citizenship was lower and the above number most probably includes also those who in fact already possessed Macedonian republican citizenship but only applied for a confirmation of their status.

It was only with the admission of Macedonia to the UN in April of 1993 that its sovereignty and citizenship received full recognition and legitimacy. Although it might seem an exaggeration to claim that 'the EU diplomatic community has a function in Skopje akin to that of colonial governors on dependent territories...' (Pettifer 2001: 141), one must recognise the crucial role the international community played not only in conflict prevention in the early 1990s, but also in the very conception and consolidation of the Macedonian state and society after 2001. While being hesitant to intervene in the real war-zones of the former Yugoslavia at the outset of the dissolution, the US pinpointed Macedonia as having a central role for the stability and security of the Balkans and its geopolitical interests in the region. It has been argued that 'prolonged involvement in Macedonian politics by the United States and EU indicates that Macedonian instability is perceived to threaten the entire region' (Irwin 2010: 329). Yet, one equally has to acknowledge the importance of the fact that conflict was avoided thanks also to the predominance of moderate forces in both the Macedonian and the Albanian political camps as well as the ordinary citizens who did not resort to violence even during the 2001 conflict when conditions seemed ripe for a repetition of the Bosnian scenario. Thus, arguing that Slavic Macedonian opinion favoured a middle path implying neither rupturing relations with Serbia nor aligning with Serbia against Europe, while Macedonia's Albanians have shown little inclination for unity with Albania or Kosovo, would appear to be a plausible conclusion (Irwin 2010).

As the only Yugoslav successor state which was both internally and externally contested, Macedonia went through a troubled and lengthy process of state-building and international recognition in the 1990s. The prominent phenomenon of ethnicisation and politicisation of citizenship in this period could be understood as a partial response of a weak state to menacing voices and initiatives from within and hostile and diplomatically stronger ones from without. The 1990s in Macedonia were marked by a succession of abortive attempts to fashion itself as a nation-state and to put in place an ethno-national citizenship regime. Although Macedonia managed to avoid full-scale conflict and boasted of its image as the 'oasis of peace', the recognition from the EU for this stabilising role came only at the end of 1995 when the Union established diplomatic relations with Macedonia. This delayed rapprochement proved a not very promising start of the long path to the Euro-Atlantic integration.

### 3 The Intervention Phase: ethnizenship

It has been plausibly argued that ‘It was an impressive achievement of international conflict management to bring the protagonists from the battlefield of northern and western Macedonia to the negotiating table and arrive at Ohrid Agreement’ (Pippidi & Krastev 2004: 141). Although, at the time of its signature in August 2001, it seemed a contested product of forced and delicate bargaining, the Ohrid Framework Agreement marked the start of a new era for Macedonia. Its political, legal and even cultural outlook was subject to reform, reconceptualisation and reconsideration – to the liking of some and to the dismay of others. Hence, 2001 is considered a milestone and makes it natural to divide the recent history of the country into pre- and post-2001 phases. The Stabilisation and Association Agreement (SAA) which the EU signed with Macedonia on 9 April 2001, during the hostilities involving the Macedonian state security forces and Albanian rebel groups, seems to have been another strong signal that the country’s borders and integrity are inviolable, but also an incentive for the compromises and for changes to be accepted and implemented. With secession from Macedonia not being present whatsoever on the agenda at Ohrid (Irwin 2010), the Agreement established that ‘there are no territorial solutions to ethnic issues’ and that ‘the multi-ethnic character of Macedonia’s society must be preserved and reflected in public life’.

#### 3.1 The Ohrid Framework Agreement

The Ohrid Agreement was conceptualised as a framework and ‘implies a process of legal development rather than the conclusive settlement of all issues relating to interethnic relation’ (Bieber 2004: 244). Almost ten years after the conflict, the implementation of the Agreement is on-going and the deputy prime-minister (usually of Albanian origin) is responsible for the fulfilment of its provisions. The present political system, mechanisms of decision-making and local governance, among other matters, all derive from it. Carved along ethnic lines but also ambiguously evoking civic values,<sup>19</sup> the constitutional amendments and subsequent legislation established a system of de facto consociational/consensual democracy, which includes a double-majority (or so-called Badinter majority) voting system – requiring both a parliamentary majority and a majority among Albanian and other

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<sup>19</sup> The amended Preamble to the Macedonian Constitution now reads: ‘The citizens of the Republic of Macedonia, the Macedonian people, as well as citizens living within its borders who are part of the Albanian people, the Turkish people, the Vlach people, the Serbian people, the Romany people, the Bosniak people and others taking responsibility for the present and future of their fatherland, aware of and grateful to their predecessors for their sacrifice and dedication in their endeavours and struggle to create an independent and sovereign state of Macedonia, and responsible to future generations to preserve and develop everything that is valuable from the rich cultural inheritance and coexistence within Macedonia, equal in rights and obligations towards the common good’.

non-majority MPs, for laws that directly concern the culture, use of language, education, personal documentation and use of symbols. If one takes into consideration the valid argument that 'power-sharing systems must be conceived of as being more flexible and process oriented, eventually leading to a diminishing of ethnic identity, rather than static and unchangeable' (Bieber 2004: 239), one is led to observe the very opposite process of pronounced ethnic identities in the Macedonian case. Thus, paradoxically, symbolic geography and mapping out ethnic/religious territories came to the fore with the Ohrid Agreement, in particular through its provisions and later reforms regarding decentralisation and proportional representation in the public administration.

The Law on Local Self-Government was enacted in January 2002 and the Law on Territorial Organisation of the Local Self-Government from August 2004 reduced the number of municipalities from 123 to 84. Moreover, the new territorial organisation implied the redrawing of certain municipal borders in order to create ethnic majorities, which was highly contested and opposed, in particular by ethnic Macedonian residents in the capital and brought to a referendum which eventually had a low turnout. Interestingly enough, the United States of America recognised the country under its official name one day before the referendum, a gesture which was interpreted by many as a well-planned move to hamper the scheduled referendum whose success would have otherwise required a redrafting of the entire Law on Local Self-Government.

Although the new decentralisation map solved many issues relating to the display of non-state symbols and the official use of languages other than Macedonian on municipal level, it did not solve more crucial issues such as economic hardship, infrastructure and development. Hence, research in the field led to the conclusion that 'it is not in the Albanian parts of Kicevo town, however, but in the rural Albanian municipalities of the region that the absence of a state is most visible' (Knaus, Bender & Cox 2004: 129). Moreover, the proportional representation requirement has implied in certain cases the over-employment of non-ethnic Macedonians<sup>20</sup> and the translation of economic issues into ethnic terms in the public discourse. As it has been plausibly argued that, 'for their part, ethnic Macedonian politicians have an equally challenging job of explaining to future university graduates, in an environment where 48.3 per cent of people under 30 have never been employed and the number of educated unemployed is spiralling, that new recruitment into the public administration in the foreseeable future will strongly favour Albanians' (Knaus, Bender & Cox 2004: 137). These trends have been interpreted as perpetuating inequality between citizens and discrimination of the majority, arguments which encounter fertile soil in an atmosphere where unemployment is particularly high.

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<sup>20</sup> According to Abdulakim Ademi, deputy Prime Minister and head of the Secretariat for the Implementation of the *Ohrid Framework Agreement*, 407 individuals were employed in the public sector: seven Roma, ten Bosniaks, two Vlachs, two Serbs, 22 Turks, five Macedonians and the rest were Albanian in 2009.

'Се распаѓа охридската рамка' [The Ohrid frame is falling apart], *Dnevnik*, [daily newspaper], 5 March 2010.

As a consequence, the constitutional and legislative amendments deriving from the Ohrid Framework Agreement made Macedonia embark on a long road of reform, which also included its citizenship legislation.

### 3.2 Citizenship reformed

The ratification of the European Convention on Nationality in 2003 presaged the comprehensive amendments to the citizenship law the following year. A new reduced residency requirement of eight years was introduced with the enactment of the Law for Changing and Amending the Law on Citizenship in February 2004.<sup>21</sup> The debate in Parliament focused on the residency requirement again, as the right-wing opposition proposed one of ten years and opposed the inclusion of a transitional provision for former Yugoslav citizens by claiming that the 1992 Law had already contained one.<sup>22</sup>

As the few media reports on the issue underlined, the country's president, who originally came from the main opposition party, refused to sign the Law when it was first voted in parliament in November 2003.<sup>23</sup> This was because it did not provide any basis for the acquisition of Macedonian citizenship for all Macedonians by origin who were born and lived outside of Macedonia and did not qualify under the emigrants' provision.<sup>24</sup> The article regulating the acquisition of citizenship by expatriates was amended by a supplementary definition of an expatriate as 'a citizen of R. Macedonia who emigrated from R. Macedonia to another country – with the exception of it being a kin-state, regardless of gender, race, skin colour, national and social origin, political and religious belief, material and social status'. What might be problematic is the element of the kin-state. This applies to members of the Albanian, Turkish or Serb traditional minorities and ethnic communities who decide or had decided to emigrate permanently to Albania, Turkey or Serbia respectively. It has been argued that this way of defining emigrants is particularly discriminatory against Turks who emigrated, for the most part against their will, from Macedonia in the 1950s and the 1960s (Imeri 2006, ECRI 2010).

The signing of the loyalty oath was another novelty introduced by the 2004 amendments to the citizenship legislation. The language requirement provision was also amended to provide that the phrase 'to the extent that one can easily communicate with the environment' would be used in order to facilitate the passing

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<sup>21</sup> The enactment of the amendments to the Law on Citizenship was not accompanied by a public debate since at the same period (January-February 2004) the public was engaged in other debated issues which came as a result of the *Ohrid Framework Agreement*: the opening of an Albanian-language state university in Tetovo and the new territorial organisation which redrew municipal borders and for which a referendum was organised. In addition, only few days after the publication of the Law, Macedonia's President was tragically killed in a plane crash.

<sup>22</sup> Olivera Vojnovska, 'Државјанство со осум години престој во земјава' [Citizenship with an eight-year residency], *Utrinski* [daily newspaper], 23 January 2004.

<sup>23</sup> *Assembly of the Republic of Macedonia*,

<<http://www.sobranie.mk/default.asp?ItemID=A0EAF03BBB791A4CB6AEE4F690D9C9CA>>

<sup>24</sup> Olivera Vojnovska, 'Државјанство со осум години престој во земјава' [Citizenship with an eight-year residency], *Utrinski* [daily newspaper], 23 January 2004.

of the language test for persons for whom it represented an obstacle, such as people from rural areas of non-ethnic Macedonian origin. The security provision was preserved, but unlike the previous practice when the deciding bodies in the Ministry of Interior exercised their discretionary powers, the 2004 amendments established a new practice of providing a compulsory explanation for a refusal of an application, rendering the whole process more transparent.

Most importantly, the amended Law introduced a new transitional provision to target former citizens of SFR Yugoslavia. It established that this category of individuals 'may acquire citizenship of the Republic of Macedonia if within two years after the entry into force of this law they have submitted an application, provided that no criminal proceedings are being carried out against them in the Republic of Macedonia, for criminal acts which threaten the security and defence of the Republic'.<sup>25</sup> The transitional period of two years was primarily aimed at resolving the pending cases of unregulated citizenship of mostly Roma and Albanian residents in Macedonia, who under the previous 1992 Law failed to fulfil and/or to prove the fifteen-year residency requirement. In December 2004, in order to facilitate the procedure and to avoid the initial mistake of not properly informing potential applicants, the Macedonian Government in coordination with the UNHCR launched a big information campaign. The media was used and explanatory brochures printed in the Roma and Albanian languages explained the citizenship application procedure in simpler terms.

The contested debates on numbers reached a conclusion with the final amendment to the citizenship legislation in 2008,<sup>26</sup> a point when one could claim that the intervention phase reached its definite conclusion. Available figures state that, in the period from 2004 until 2009, 4,984 long-term habitual residents were granted citizenship of the Republic of Macedonia under the transitional provision of art. 14 for former Yugoslav citizens, 368 applications were rejected, and 167 decisions are pending (UNHCR 2009). These are part of the total of 98,990<sup>27</sup> persons who acquired citizenship of the Republic of Macedonia from 1993 to 2008, of whom 88.6 per cent were citizens of the former Yugoslav republics (Resolution of Migration Policy of R. Macedonia 2008). In August 2009 the UNHCR reported that, in the period from 2001

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<sup>25</sup> Закон за изменување и дополнување на Законот за државјанството на Република Македонија [Law for Changing and Amending the law on Citizenship of the Republic of Macedonia], *Службен весник на Република Македонија* [Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia], 08/2004.

<sup>26</sup> Aimed at facilitating the citizenship acquisition procedure for refugees and stateless persons, as a final stage in the process of resolving the legal status of the primarily Albanian and Roma refugees from the 1999 Kosovo crisis who could not return or voluntarily decided to stay in Macedonia. Art. 8 of the Law (as amended in 2008) establishes that stateless persons and persons with recognised status of refugees can apply for Macedonian citizenship if they have been legally resident in Macedonia for at least six years prior to the application. The amendment abolished the requirements for release from the last (in this case Serbian) citizenship and for not being prosecuted in the country of citizenship, as a number of Kosovo Albanians had criminal charges pressed against them in Serbia.

<sup>27</sup> The document quotes a figure of 60,585 (out of 98,990) who in this period acquired Macedonian citizenship through the transitional provisions for former Yugoslav citizens; 14,567 who acquired citizenship on the basis of marriage to a Macedonian citizen; 4,392 through regular naturalisation and 5,676 minors whose parents had acquired Macedonian citizenship.

to 2009, 7,379 persons were subject to assisted and spontaneous repatriation and that 1,686 asylum seekers and refugees in total remain in the country, 1,088 of whom are under humanitarian protection.

### 3.3 Portable citizenship: diaspora politics

The crucial role which the 'long-distance nationalism' of diaspora communities (Anderson 2001: 42) has played in the Balkans, in particular since the dissolution of Yugoslavia and the subsequent armed conflicts, has been a research topic in itself (Hockenos 2003, Kostovicova & Bojicic-Dzelilovic 2006). These émigré groups are not only the embodiment of what has been intelligently termed 'portable nations' and 'portable and deterritorialized nationalism' (Verdery 1998: 302), but they have also forged transnational networks of organised criminal activity and became significantly involved in local politics through financial capital and allying with the new post-communist political elites (Kostovicova & Bojicic-Dzelilovic 2006).

In the Macedonian context, the influence of the diaspora communities on internal socio-political developments has been particularly visible in the recent trends of historical revisionism and so-called 'antiquisation' tendencies.<sup>28</sup> The myth of Alexander the Great has been present within ethnic Macedonian communities from Aegean Macedonia (present-day Greece) and has been preserved and revived through their descendants who constitute a significant part of the Macedonian émigré communities and even contemporary political elites, including the present Prime Minister.<sup>29</sup> One also has to take into consideration the ethnic Macedonian minorities in the neighbouring countries, namely Greece, Bulgaria and Albania, whose generally marginal status and non-recognised identity as a separate ethnic group in Greece and Bulgaria has played an important role both in internal politics in Macedonia and in bilateral relations. The European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) noted that individuals who wish to express their Macedonian, Turkish or other identity incur hostility and deplored the fact that even though the European Court on Human Rights in the case *Sidiropoulos and others v Greece* found a violation by Greece of the applicants' right to freedom of association, they have been unable to register their non-profit Macedonian (Slavic) cultural organisation (Commissioner for Human Rights 2009). In a similar context, the European Court of Human Rights found Bulgaria in breach of the ECHR (UMO

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<sup>28</sup> The government is sponsoring the erection of an expensive statue and fountain dedicated to Alexander the Great in the capital's main square, as part of the 'Skopje 2014' project (see below). A lack of public debate and many controversies have also surrounded the building of the 'Museum of the Macedonian Revolutionary Struggle and the Victims of Communism', where in a typical post-communist trend there is an attempt to stigmatize the communist past and portray certain historical phenomena in a revisionist manner. Another related controversial project was a state-sponsored proposed erection of a Christian Orthodox church at Skopje's main square, as a reaction to which the Muslim Albanian community submitted a demand for the rebuilding of an old Ottoman mosque at the same square. Parts of the NGO sector protested the destruction and ethnicisation of the capital's main public space.

<sup>29</sup> Interview with Prof. Ljubomir D. Frckoski, former Minister of Interior and Minister of Foreign Affairs (May 2010).

Ilinden-Pirin and others v Bulgaria) for failing to allow the registration of a political party of the Macedonian minority (Commissioner for Human Rights 2010).

At yet another level of ethno-national citizenship and violation of human rights, the former Greek citizens of ethnic Macedonian origin who fled Greece as children during the Greek Civil War 1946-1949 were subject to former art. 19 of the Greek Nationality Code which provided for deprivation of citizenship of citizens of non-Greek descent (Commissioner for Human Rights 2009). The members of this group who are Macedonian citizens and active in the Association of the Children-Refugees from Aegean Macedonia have also taken up legal procedures to reacquire their Greek citizenship and to reclaim their properties.<sup>30</sup> Although seemingly part of ethnic communities, all of these groups have suffered inner ideological frictions which could account in large measure for their unsuccessful attempts at voicing their claims. The formal organisation of the Macedonian expatriates also reflects the deep ideological cleavages within the ethnic Macedonian community. Thus, the 'House of Immigrants from Macedonia' which has existed since 1951 as the only formal association for expatriates, had its status downgraded with the establishment of the governmental Emigration Agency and had its funds cut.<sup>31</sup> The former was considered a remnant of the socialist past, while the latter was established by the right-wing VMRO-DPMNE government.<sup>32</sup> These trends comply with a deeply embedded division within the Macedonian autonomist/independence struggle which could be traced back to the interwar period in what was termed Macedonian nationalism on the left and Macedonian nationalism on the right (Rossos 2008).

Moreover, somewhat belatedly in comparison to other post-Yugoslav states, in September 2009 voting rights were extended to the emigrant communities from Macedonia. This would imply a right to vote in the presidential and in the parliamentary elections by electing three MPs in the three additional electoral districts (Europe/Africa, North and South America and Australia/Asia).<sup>33</sup> Unofficially, one of the MPs thus elected would be of Albanian origin, considering the predominant number of Macedonian emigrants of Albanian origin elsewhere in Europe, and the remaining two would be of ethnic Macedonian origin. This was challenged and opposed by the Liberal Democratic Party which demanded that the provisions are annulled as the state does not possess the capacity and ability to organise and run such elections properly.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Interview with Mr. Gjorgji Donevski, President of the Association of Children-Refugees from Aegean Macedonia (May 2010).

<sup>31</sup> Interview with Ivan Dzo Petreski, President of the House of Immigrants from Macedonia (October 2010).

<sup>32</sup> VMRO-DPMNE stands for Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organisation – Democratic Party for Macedonian National Unity.

<sup>33</sup> 'Иселениците од вчера со право на глас' [Since yesterday emigrants have voting rights], *Dnevnik* [daily newspaper], 2 September 2009.

Venco Donev, 'Хрватска и Бугарија ќе се откажат од гласањето на дијаспората' [Croatia and Bulgaria will abolish diaspora voting], *Nova Makedonija* [daily newspaper], 3 February 2010.

<sup>34</sup> Tatjana Popovska, 'Законски недоречен глас на дијаспората' [Legally unarticulated diaspora vote], *Dnevnik* [daily newspaper], 11 February 2010.

### 3.4 Party politics and politicisation of citizenship

From the very outset of the consolidation of the political life in post-Yugoslav Macedonia the political scene has been dominated by two main political parties from the ethnic Macedonian block who have rarely shared a common platform: the left leaning social-democrats (Social Democratic Alliance of Macedonia - SDSM) and former League of Communists' members and the right-wing VMRO-DPMNE,<sup>35</sup> self-proclaimed followers of the late nineteenth century Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization. An unwritten rule since 1991, every coalition government has included an ethnic Albanian party: the Democratic Party of Albanians (DPA/PDSH) and the more recent Democratic Union for Integration (DUI/BDI) which emerged out of the 2001 conflict.<sup>36</sup> As Horowitz rightly argues, coalitions are 'at least a guarantee against total exclusion' (Horowitz 1993: 33). However, with political life being shaped strictly along ethnic lines, the civic concept has appeared to be alien both to voters and political elites. The only exception was the 2009 presidential elections<sup>37</sup> when ethnic Albanian President of the New Democracy Party Imer Selmani managed to transcend ethnic boundaries and won a significant number of votes from ethnic Macedonian voters and thus earned the informal title of 'the Macedonian Obama'. This, however, has proved to be the exception rather than an emerging rule. Thus, one could argue that the consociational approach to power-sharing in Macedonia is indeed marked by one of its major drawbacks – 'the reliance on elite accommodation and the problem of elite-initiated conflict' (Sisk 1996: 38). Although nominally unitary, Macedonia has been divided into symbolically demarcated territories, generally corresponding with the amended boundaries of local self-governance. Political elites pursue ethnic politics of symbols and monuments in areas where there is a clear majority, without taking in consideration the needs or opinions of the numerically smaller groups.

With politics having entered every pore of life and party membership having become crucial for obtaining employment in the public sector,<sup>38</sup> political ideology

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<sup>35</sup> Being the main ruling party at the moment, VMRO-DPMNE's government has assumed a somewhat non-flexible stance on the name issue with Greece, insisting on a referendum for the agreed solution and guarantees for the Macedonian identity and language. This would not come as a surprise if one takes into consideration a petition to the Constitutional Court VMRO-DPMNE submitted in 1993 asking the Court to examine the constitutionality and legality of the agreement the Government of Macedonia gave for assuming membership in the UN under the name 'former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia'. The Court responded negatively. U. Number 111/193-0-0 (10 November 1993).

<sup>36</sup> Ali Ahmeti, present leader of the party was the commander-in-chief of the rebel forces during the conflict and thus perceived as a 'terrorist' by ethnic Macedonians who saw it as unjust that former armed rebels were allowed to enter Parliament as MPs after the signing of the *Ohrid Framework Agreement*.

<sup>37</sup> Recently the Constitution was amended to lower the threshold for voter turn-out in the second round of presidential elections from 50 per cent to 40 per cent. This indicates a more general trend both in parliamentary and in presidential elections of relatively low turn-outs and protest non-voting. It has been rightfully argued that it is perceived that 'elections produce more politicians, already seen as parasites, and more talk' (Pipiddi & Krastev 2004: 273).

<sup>38</sup> This among other things was reflected in the 2009 progress report from Brussels which stated the following with regard to the 2008 parliamentary elections: 'However, the number of credible reports of pressure on or



and political culture have been superseded by ethnicity, religion, corruption and populism in what had been termed 'ethno-criminal politics' (Kostovicova & Bojicic-Dzelilovic 2006: 234). As has been argued elsewhere, in post-communist societies mobilisation against a person has become easier and is more likely to be successful since frustration with politics and politicians has been very high (Pippidi & Krastev 2004). Thus, for two decades the Macedonian electorate has been caught up in the web of a constant 'ethnification of the political process' (Bieber 2004: 242). Moreover, corruption being one of the main problems pointed out by external observers and in progress reports, it has been repeatedly detected in the 'scandal-ridden system of party finance' (Irwin 2010: 345), which is set to improve with the recent amendments to the Law on Financing of Political Parties enhancing the transparency of donations.<sup>39</sup> The above-mentioned ethnicisation of the socio-political reality also applies to the crucial spheres of media/information and education.<sup>40</sup> Not only is the educational system segregated, offering no platforms for interaction of students from different ethnic/linguistic backgrounds, ethnic intolerance is also fuelled by the 'dissemination of stereotypes and incidents of ethnic hostility in the media' (ECRI 2010: 8).

The present opposition led by the social-democrats has constantly insisted that social and economic matters are more important and relevant to the current time than the highly controversial and costly project of 'Skopje 2014', announced by the government in February 2010. Conceptualised as an attempt to reshape the capital's outlook by adorning the city centre with numerous monuments including a giant statue and fountain dedicated to Alexander the Great, the project has been criticised as yet another dimension of the overall endeavour to redefine the public space, to bring about historical revisionism and to effect the invention of traditions. Those in favour of the initiative have pointed to the lack of monuments and the general neglect Skopje had suffered under the previous governments and under socialism. However, the entire trend of historical revisionism and 'antiquisation' (which have become particularly prominent after 2008 when Macedonia failed in its NATO membership bid despite fulfilling all the membership requirements) should be

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intimidation of citizens, particularly public servants, throughout the election period detracted from the overall quality of the election process'. *The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia 2009 Progress Report* <[http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/key\\_documents/2009/mk\\_rapport\\_2009\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/key_documents/2009/mk_rapport_2009_en.pdf)>

<sup>39</sup> In the sphere of anti-corruption, the 2009 Progress report stated that the State Commission for Prevention of Corruption (SCPC) 'should make efforts to be more pro-active in pursuing anti-corruption policy' and furthermore that 'public trust in the independence and impartiality of the SCPC remains low'. *The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia 2009 Progress Report* <[http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/key\\_documents/2009/mk\\_rapport\\_2009\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/key_documents/2009/mk_rapport_2009_en.pdf)>.

<sup>40</sup> The only one which escapes the pattern of monolingual media is the television channel ALSAT-M which broadcasts program in both Macedonian and Albanian language or in one of the languages with subtitles. The only educational institution which is not entirely private and offers education in Macedonian, Albanian and English is the South-East European University in Tetovo established at the initiative of the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities Max van der Stoep. As the most recent ECRI report noted, the segregated education system 'entails a risk that having been educated in different languages and separated from the earliest age, the members of the different communities might co-exist without knowing each other and communicating, thus perpetuating mutual mistrust and intolerance' (ECRI 2010: 18).

observed within the context of the conflict over the country's name with Greece. The insistence on the ancient past and the neglect of the Slavic and the anti-fascist heritage in recent years could be generally viewed as a response to the different misrecognitions and contestations of its identity, its language or its name by some of Macedonia's neighbours. In this context, Charles Taylor's observation that 'our identity is partly shaped by recognition or its absence, often by the misrecognition of others' (Taylor 1994: 25) sheds valuable light.

### **3.5 Battling invisible citizenship: the civil society sphere**

As Ivan Vejvoda rightly observes, 'the often spontaneous and bottom-up process that led to the formation of states and civil societies, the public/private divide, free markets and enterprise, the rule of law, and political and civic rights, and which took at least a century or two to achieve in the West, needs now to be established...from above, by design, and in a hurry' (Vejvoda 1995: 38). The civil society sector was also one of the novelties of the post-Yugoslav era and since that time it has not proven immune to the influence of politics. Although sometimes wrongly accused, NGOs are often blamed by political parties for allegedly siding with or receiving support from other political parties or for acting with hidden agendas. Thus, it was noted that the government did not fully respect the existing consultation mechanisms and failed to engage in a meaningful dialogue with civil society (European Commission 2009: 17). Being largely financed by foreign donors, the larger NGOs which assume a more critical stance towards certain governmental initiatives are consequently easily targeted as non-patriotic and hence not deserving of a say in national policies and legislation. As the most recent Progress Report noted, 'most of the draft legislation and regulatory impact assessment forms were not available to the general public for review. There is no systematic and transparent mechanism for consulting civil society on national development policies, legislation, programmes or other strategic documents' (European Commission 2009: 17). This was best reflected after the adoption of the long-debated Law for the Prevention and Protection from Discrimination in April 2010.

The Law does not explicitly mention sexual orientation as a basis for discrimination did not reflect previous recommendations by the OSCE and the Venice Commission and lacked input by the civil society (ECRI 2010). This was in compliance with the conclusion by the European Commission that 'lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people are not protected against direct or indirect discrimination and are stigmatised, particularly in rural areas' (European Commission 2009: 20). Numerically smaller minorities, such as the Roma in particular, as well as people with disabilities and children are among the groups which suffer from discrimination in different societal spheres. Indeed, 'minorities other than Albanians in Macedonia have been largely excluded from negotiations of the protection of rights' (Bieber 2004: 242).

Although the Macedonian authorities never fail to mention the fact that the country has the only Roma municipality (and a Roma Mayor) in Europe, the Roma still remain under-represented in the public administration. The Roma civil society sector has indeed proliferated in recent years and the Decade of Roma Inclusion 2005-2015 has initiated progress in the improvement of minority and cultural rights. Yet, in the sphere of economic rights, Roma still occupy the bottom of the social pyramid with unemployment at 73 per cent and two thirds of households living below the poverty line (European Commission 2009). Moreover, as the most recent report by the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance noted, particularly worrying is the high school drop-out rate of Roma children, their over-representation in educational institutions for students with mental disability and the number of Roma children on the street (ECRI 2010). Moreover, it has been pointed out that the failure to register Roma children at birth leaves many of them without a civic identity and stripped of social benefits.<sup>41</sup> As recent research and observations by the NGO sector demonstrate, 840 Roma children were identified as having incomplete documentation and 338 of them were not registered at all (UNICEF and Centre for Human Rights and Conflict Resolution 2009). Registering children at birth has been a permanent problem for the Roma because of complex administrative procedures which require the submission of additional documents such as certificates of marriage and medical certificates. However, progress has recently been made in registering 2,834 Roma individuals, whose existence was previously never statistically recorded. As part of a project involving UNHCR, the Ministry of Interior, the Ministry of Labour and several NGOs, a considerable number of individuals who did not possess any identification personal documents or had some with expired validity were registered and obtained the necessary documents which would allow them access to health, education and other benefits. However, this remains a pending issue, as a comprehensive solution would require a grass-roots approach to educate the Roma community and to eliminate the different forms of discrimination that they still experience.

As has been argued throughout, the intervention phase included the involvement of both external and internal actors: the EU, the USA, various international organisations, as well as domestic NGOs, political elites and administrative bodies. The ethno-national conception of citizenship, emphasising the 'ownership' of the country by its ethnic Macedonian majority from the first decade of Macedonian independence was replaced after the 2001 conflict by an ethnicised one, whereby belonging to one of Macedonia's ethnic communities became the primary factor, effectively rendering a person visible and determining of his or her access to various rights. Although the citizenship legislation was amended to accommodate the most prominent European standards as set out in the European Convention on

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<sup>41</sup> 'Децата на улица се без идентитет' [Street children have no identity], *Dnevnik* [daily newspaper], 10 September 2009.

'Документи и за неевидентираниите Роми' [Documents for the unregistered Roma], *Dnevnik* [daily newspaper], 3 December 2009.

Nationality and it certainly allowed for the solving of the majority of cases of unregulated status and considerably improved the different procedures, the broader arena of citizenship regarding citizens' rights and sense of belonging became all the more ethnicised and thus produced new challenges to the Macedonian fragile social and political spheres.

#### **4 Stabilisation: incorporating multi-ethnic into a new supranational citizenship?**

The 1974 edition of the Encyclopaedia Britannica noted: 'Although there are likely to be difficult years ahead, politically and economically, the Yugoslav system is so deeply rooted, and the survival of a strong, independent, non-aligned Yugoslavia is so vital to the maintenance of European stability, that the country will undoubtedly survive the shock of Tito's departure' (Thompson 1992: 93). Less than two decades later, in a context where the European Union was being further consolidated and Yugoslavia torn to pieces in a violent conflict, this statement must have seemed a shocking misjudgement. The foundation of the Yugoslav European Movement (EM)<sup>42</sup> in March 1991 at a highly publicised ceremony in Belgrade in the presence of the diplomatic corps, the Yugoslav intellectual and political (federal) elite, was the last in the line of numerous links, projects, and initiatives between the European Communities/the European Union and Yugoslavia, starting with the association negotiations and trade agreements in the 1970s.<sup>43</sup> All of the former Yugoslav republics except Slovenia would have to wait almost an entire decade for an initial renewal of the broken bonds with the European Union.

Thus, it was not until 1999 that the Stabilization and Association process was launched between the EU and Macedonia but this in no way explicitly offered the prospect of a membership. As mentioned above, Macedonia signed its Stabilization and Association Agreement (SAA) in April 2001. In March 2004 it submitted its formal application for membership and one and a half years later in December 2005 was given a candidate status. While Croatia received its candidate status and a recommendation for start of accession talks in the same year (2004), it took four years for the Commission to recommend start of the talks for Macedonia (October 2009). Although it was the only Yugoslav republic not to be involved in the dissolution conflicts, Macedonia has been seriously lagging behind in its economic progress and Euro-Atlantic integrations. The reasons are numerous, both external and internal and it is the combination of many, including the unsolved conflict with Greece over the

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<sup>42</sup> Founded in 1948 in The Hague, it had Winston Churchill as one of its honorary presidents.

<sup>43</sup> Interview with Mr. Stojan Andov, spokesperson of the first post-Yugoslav Macedonian Parliament, head of the Yugoslav negotiating team with the European Communities in the second half of the 1970s and Yugoslavia's last ambassador to Iraq (April 2009). Mr. Andov asserted that Yugoslavia's membership in the EC was hampered by ideological differences, namely by high Yugoslav functionaries who genuinely upheld the ideology of nonalignment. Entering the European structures they believed would represent a betrayal to Yugoslavia's particular path and ideology.

country's name, which have produced the stalemate. As Vladimir Gligorov rightly argues, 'the processes of disintegration and integration are not yet finished. On the one hand, there is the process of regional integration that has to be part of EU integration. On the other hand, there is the process of nation and state building that is still unfinished in a number of states or state-like political entities' (Gligorov 2004: 96).

#### **4.1 Rapprochement**

Battling with the 'more stringent conditionality' (Fagan 2010: 20), the long Europeanisation has started to produce opponents and still rare voices of Euro-scepticism which observe the role of the international community and the EU since 1991 through the concepts of 'liberalization from above' and 'imposed transitions' (Karl & Schmitter 2007). Although everyone recognises that the EU, along with the US, invested both diplomatic and material resources in Macedonia (Irwin 2010) and that the core reforms in Macedonia have happened as a result of the EU's 'external governance', it took the Union long time to define and clearly articulate its vision for what has become the Western Balkans region. Until 2005, the administration of the Stabilization and Association process and the relations with the Western Balkans was the responsibility of the Directorate for External Relations rather than the Directorate for Enlargement (Fagan 2010; Shaw 2010). On the other hand, several European initiatives have been of considerable benefit to Macedonia and the region, such as the Central European Free Trade Agreement (CEFTA), the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe (along with the Regional Co-operation Council - RCC as its successor organisation), as well as the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA). This has led to observations that 'from the perspective of the Western Balkans in 2009, the EU looks and acts like a multilateral development agency: it funds road-building, railways and hospitals; it trains police officers, civil servants and doctors; supports community development, NGOs and substitutes for the absence of state and market provision in the realm of welfare and education' (Fagan 2010: 1).

The entry of Bulgaria into the EU in 2007 caused some increase in the number of cases of double citizenship, generally motivated by greater mobility for educational or work purposes, i.e. access to the EU job market. For the period 2000-2006, an estimated figure of applications for acquisition of Bulgarian citizenship by origin by Macedonian citizens quotes a total of 32,702, with a permanent increase since 2000 when there were only 113 submitted applications (Smilov & Jileva 2010: 15). In the same period, 10,850 Macedonian citizens obtained Bulgarian citizenship on the grounds of their Bulgarian origin by vice presidential decrees. The symbolic battles between Macedonia and Bulgaria over historical legacies, symbols and identity recently entered into the language of citizenship, by employing legal means for obtaining symbolic and disputed aims. The Bulgarian state still considers Macedonia to be inhabited by ethnic Bulgarians - a fact alluded to by recently proposed draft amendments to the Bulgarian Citizenship law and statements by

Bozhidar Dimitrov, the Minister without Portfolio responsible for Bulgarians abroad.<sup>44</sup> Unofficially, since the entry of Bulgaria into the EU, and in particular since the recent decision on visa liberalisation for Macedonia, the number of applications for Bulgarian citizenship by Macedonian citizens has decreased. Since the majority applied under the provisions for Bulgarians by origin, they did not need to have a permanent resident status (Smilov & Jileva 2010) and used the Bulgarian passport or ID exclusively for legal economic migration within the EU. As certain recently publicised cases of double Macedonian-Bulgarian citizenship have demonstrated,<sup>45</sup> further complications may arise, especially if citizenship continues to be seen through the lenses of ethnic/national belonging and to be used or abused for winning battles over symbols and historical claims.

#### 4.2 Prospects for EU membership and European citizenship

Prospective membership for Macedonia in the European Union has been among the rare, if not the only common goal and platform for the different political subjects and major ethnic groups. The visa liberalisation indeed put an end to the 'sense of humiliation and entrapment' (Jansen 2009) and the deplored 'consular sadism' (Campbell 2005), but it also further emphasised the gravity of the economic situation and quality of life since not many citizens have been actually able to profit from the visa-free travel. However, one has to underline that the financial assistance from the EU has increased year by year and the allocation for 2010 totals just over ninety-two million Euros, with the funds for regional and rural development increasing steadily since 2007.<sup>46</sup>

While regional cooperation has been on the agenda for years now, one could not say that it has been either genuinely embraced by domestic politicians or strongly insisted upon by Brussels. Bordering two EU member states, one NATO member and another de facto European protectorate, Macedonia's priorities would lie in pursuing good neighbourly relations and a regional approach to solving local problems, which more often than not span different countries in the region. As has been argued, 'regional reintegration can be expected once the process of EU integration advances

<sup>44</sup> 'Between three and four million Bulgarians live abroad', *The Sofia Echo*, 6 October 2009.

'Етническите българи, завършили висше образование у нас, ще получават по-бързо гражданство' (2009), [Ethnic Bulgarians with Bulgarian university degrees will acquire Bulgarian citizenship faster], *Dnevnik* [daily newspaper], 5 October 2009.

<[http://www.dnevnik.bg/bulgaria/2009/10/05/794919\\_etnicheskite\\_bulgari\\_zavurshili\\_visshe\\_obrazovanie\\_u/](http://www.dnevnik.bg/bulgaria/2009/10/05/794919_etnicheskite_bulgari_zavurshili_visshe_obrazovanie_u/)>.

<sup>45</sup> A former Minister of Health who holds both Macedonian and Bulgarian citizenship and was sought by Macedonian authorities for criminal charges managed to escape extradition to Macedonia from Poland because of his Bulgarian citizenship. Similarly, a woman who held double Macedonian-Bulgarian citizenship and who was imprisoned for violating certain provisions of family law caused a diplomatic scandal and an intervention by the Bulgarian President asking for her release claiming she was criminally prosecuted because of her alleged Bulgarian identity. Most notably however, the former Macedonian PM Ljubco Georgievski acquired Bulgarian citizenship.

<sup>46</sup> 'The Former Yugoslav republic of Macedonia', *European Commission: Enlargement*, <[http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/candidate-countries/the\\_former\\_yugoslav\\_republic\\_of\\_macedonia/financial-assistance/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/candidate-countries/the_former_yugoslav_republic_of_macedonia/financial-assistance/index_en.htm)> (accessed 1 June 2010).

far enough' (Gligorov 2004: 97). Following recent evocations of the emergence of a so-called Yugo-sphere,<sup>47</sup> possible future membership in the EU for the entire region would inevitably mean relearning and renewing some not so old and partly forgotten practices of participating in a common market, dealing with supra-national governance, negotiations and bargaining and ideological rather than ethno-national convergence in the European Parliament. There would indeed be many mechanisms and practices that would be reminiscent to former Yugoslavs of their defunct federation. Eventually, few would be able to counter the argument that while 'break-ups are political (in the sense of political economy)... make-ups are economic' (Gligorov 2004: 94).

As far as citizenship is concerned, the prospect of entering a new supranational sphere, where European citizenship would provide the second protective layer and expand boundaries of mobility, might be an impetus for overcoming and leaving behind extremist or purely ethnically motivated claims in Macedonia. The opening up of borders, as would be the case with all Western Balkans countries as they entered the EU, would not only allow for the renewal of ties and greater mobility of trans-border communities and minorities, but one could also expect that it would decrease the political significance of borders and revisionist or irredentist pretensions. However, Macedonia's transition from an EU candidate to a full EU member might prove to be a long and difficult process.

## Conclusion

The Macedonian citizenship regime passed through several stages of evolution and transformation which indirectly but significantly influenced many other spheres of the socio-political life in the country, in particular inter-ethnic relations and the country's own self-image. The paper started with the socialist phase and the supranational citizenship which existed within Yugoslavia, progressing towards the first post-Yugoslav phase of consolidation and contestation with the corresponding (abortive) ethno-national citizenship. The second decade of post-Yugoslav Macedonia marked by the signature of the Ohrid Framework Agreement in 2001 endorsed what we termed the intervention phase. Rather than being de-ethnicised, citizenship was reformed, but re-ethnicised at the same time, and this time on multiple levels. What we termed the phenomenon of ethnizenship and the intervention phase were concluded with the final 2008 amendments to the citizenship legislation. The stabilisation phase could be said to have definitely begun with the recommendation by the EC for opening of negotiations for EU membership in October 2009. In view of potential future membership in the European Union, it would provisionally close the circle of citizenship transformation and presupposes a

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<sup>47</sup> See 'Entering the Yugosphere' published by *The Economist*, August 2009.

final phase of Europeanisation, i.e. of supranational (European) citizenship. Restorative drives which would entail proximity between the countries in the region on one hand and the region and the EU on the other hand, should come both from within the countries in a pro-active manner and from the EU as encouraging of home-grown and local solutions rather than simply exporting or enforcing some. Among other things, 'current policies should build on what was fair in the communist attempt to solve multiethnicity rather than import completely new institutions' (Pippidi & Krastev 2004: 274). In addition to coherence and coordination of Western policy as necessary conditions for the region's stability and security (Clement 2001), productive regionalisation, possibly drawing on some positive experiences from the Yugoslav Federation era, would have to precede an eventual Europeanisation. Enhancing the role of the civic and diminishing the one of the ethnic principle and shifting the perception of the ethnized towards that of a citizen would be a commendable overture to a new era.

As has been correctly argued, 'one must recognize the role of citizenship as an instrument that can reconcile the two identities of nationality and ethnicity and the competing demands of equality and identity' (Oomen 1997: 243). This very 'integrative function of citizenship' (Joppke & Lukes 1999: 15) is most likely to be achieved within a wider regional or indeed European sphere of supra-ethnic or supra-national belonging and citizenship. However, a 'transnational identity' (Kymlicka 2001: 314), or a civic awareness that would help transcend narrower ethnic or religious affiliations is still something to be achieved. This would *inter alia* call for 'deepening of democracy' – 'democratizing democracy' (Giddens 1999: 75), i.e. greater transparency in political affairs, strong civic culture, and a balanced triad of government-economy-civil society. Citizenship in the former Yugoslav and the Macedonian context is yet to have its dimensions of status, rights and equality strengthened and its dimension of membership/belonging weakened in importance. Indeed, 'the only option for the viability of the state is genuinely unlinking nationality and citizenship' (Koppa 2001: 59). In a region which has traditionally existed and developed within supranational political and socio-cultural entities and frameworks, such as multilingual empires or multiethnic federations, it would be a logical and a hopeful consequence that a new type of supranational citizenship and belonging would provide the answer and a solution to many pending questions that were raised in this paper.



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